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ABSTRACT

Many of the educational reform measures proposed during the last several years focus primarily on assessing students and teachers and increasing student and teacher standards. This paper offers a summary of the role of assessment in enhancing the quality of administrators. A well thought out, coordinated system of administrator assessments is suggested as a powerful force in improving the quality of school and district administrators. When developing a coordinated system of assessments to improve the quality of administrators, an analysis of the uses of various assessments should be made. The uses agreed to for inclusion in the system can then serve as building blocks for constructing the system. Various uses that assessment can play in improving administrator quality are outlined, and examples of states using new assessment procedures to improve administrator quality are cited; they include: Arkansas, California, Florida, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin. A variety of issues and problems, some technical and some political, can easily hinder attempts to develop assessment systems to improve administrator quality. A number of questions that highlight issues which may need to be resolved for success in developing new assessment systems are listed. (Author/PN)

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Abstract

Assessment and Administrator Quality

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June 10, 1985

Many of the educational reform measures proposed during the last several years focus primarily on assessing students and teachers and increasing student and teacher standards. The role of assessment in enhancing the quality of administrators is also very important.

A well thought out, coordinated system of administrator assessments can be a powerful force in improving the quality of school and district administrators. Certainly the direct assessment of an administrator's job performance is very important, but other assessments are also important in determining the quality of the tasks carried out by educational administrators as they relate to improved student learning. This is an area of assessment which will be growing rapidly and systematically the next few years.

Resolving the issues to develop and implement such a broad, coordinated system of administrator assessments will require the cooperation of researchers, educators, policy makers and interested citizens.

The paper summarizes:

1. Uses of assessment as they relate to administrator quality.

2. Examples of states which are using new assessment procedures to improve administrator quality.

3. Issues which need to be addressed in designing and implementing assessments systems related to administrator quality.

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Assessment and Administrator Quality

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INTRODUCTION

A well thought out, coordinated system of assessments can be a powerful force in improving the quality of school and district administrators. When I talk about assessment in this workshop, I am referring to more than just assessing or evaluating the job performance of administrators. Certainly the direct assessment of an administrator's job performance is very important, but in my estimation, other assessments are also important in determining the quality of the tasks carried out by educational administrators as they relate to improved student learning.

Because of the interplay of various assessments which affect the administration and administrators of schools, I would like to open up this session by looking very broadly at the topic "Assessment and Administrator Quality." My broad introduction will hopefully add to the mix of ingredients which we will discuss in the remainder of this session.

I have broken my presentation into three parts:

1. Uses of assessment as they relate to administrator quality
2. Examples of states which are using new assessment procedures to improve administrator quality
3. Issues which need to be addressed in designing and implementing assessments systems related to administrator quality

Uses of Assessments and Administrator Quality

When developing a coordinated system of assessments to improve the quality of administrators, an analysis of the uses of various assessments should be made. The uses agreed to for inclusion into the system can then form the building blocks for constructing the system. What follows is an outline of various uses that assessment can play in improving administrator quality.

A. <u>Evaluating Administrator Job Performance</u>

1. Entry into graduate programs
2. Initial employment as an administrator
3. Continuing employment and improvement
4. Providing incentives or bonuses

B. Evaluating Administrator Training Program

1. Preservice
2. Inservice

C. Assisting in Making Decisions

1. Related to personnel
   a. Initial employment
   b. Continuing employment and improvement
   c. Offering incentives or bonuses

2. Related to instructional design and curriculum improvement
   a. Proving useful feedback to students
   b. Sequencing and articulating curricula
   c. Evaluating modes of delivery of instruction
   d. Evaluating textbook effectiveness and efficiency
   e. Evaluating supplemental instructional aides and materials

D. Helping Maintain Public and Parent Involvement in Instructional Program

1. Helping parents to become involved in their student's learning
2. Keeping the press, public and school board "on task" for instructional improvement

Examples of Several States Which are Using New Assessment Procedures to Improve Administrator Quality

In a number of state, such as Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, assistance is provided to local school districts through leadership academies or assessment centers to help with the evaluation of prospective principals. Starting this fall, all new principal candidates in South Carolina must be assessed for their instructional leadership and management capabilities before being employed.

In California, pilot projects have been established to help local school districts recruit and select administrators to initiate an inservice training to evaluate and assist teachers. Florida, Arkansas, Tennessee, Texas, North Carolina and South Carolina are also providing inservice training on instructional leadership and evaluation of instructional personnel.

Tennessee and South Carolina are developing assessment programs to recognize outstanding principals to receive extra compensation. In California, Mississippi and South Carolina, comprehensive "report cards" on a school's and a district's performance are being developed.

These assessments can't help but play an important role is assisting school administrators make decisions on instructional design and curriculum improvement.

In South Carolina, in addition to the assessment of all new prospective principals, provision of training on the evaluation of instructional personnel, and incentive pay program for principals, and a comprehensive assessment of school and district performance, we are developing a statewide system for evaluating principals, increasing the entrance requirements for graduate programs and providing apprenticeships to assess those with potential for school administrations.

Many other states, school districts, associations, and universities are developing, utilizing or pilot testing various assessment procedures to improve administrator quality. Hopefully, before this conference is over, each of you interested in this area will have the opportunity to share note, observations and finding.

Possible Issues in Designing and Implementing Assessment Systems Related to Administrator Quality

A variety of issues and problems, some technical and some political, can easily "Derail" attempts to develop assessment systems to improve administrator quality. Listed below are a number of questions that highlight issues which very likely need to be resolved to be successful in developing new assessment systems.

A. How can criteria and standards be established using results from research and taking into account educational politics?

B. How can technical problems be handled in areas where there is a limited research base?

C. How can concurrence and coordination of the various types of assessment be achieved?

D. How can assessment information be presented in usable and understandable formats for non-educators who tend to be the majority of policy makers and clients and yet provide sufficient detail to provide substance to educators?

E. Who should conduct assessments to maintain objectivity from the non-educator's perspective and yet have credibility and respect among educators and education policy makers?

F. How can the paperwork and time requirements to conduct assessments be minimized?

G. How can the development of the assessment systems response to short time lines on which policy makers operate?

H. How can the various assessment be altered as research adds to the information base?

CONCLUSION

Many of the educational reform measures proposed during the last several years focus primarily on assessing students and teachers and increasing student and teacher standards. The role of assessment in enhancing the quality of administrators is also very important. Developing assessment systems to enhance the quality of administrators needs to be addressed. In my estimation, this is an area of assessment which will be growing rapidly and systematically the next few years.

Resolving the issues to develop and implement such a broad, coordinated system of assessments will require the cooperation of researchers, educators, policy makers and interested citizens.